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ABSTRACT

Before adding consulting, training, or other work to the usual responsibilities of teaching, academicians must make a number of decisions. These include whether to work in or outside of academe, how much time they have available, whether they can meet the physical and mental demands of consulting, how to arrange for initial contacts, and how much to charge for services. Potential academicians/consultants must also evince "schizo-survivability," the ability to transcend the perspectives of academe. By definition academicians/consultants are required to have both a firm grasp of theory and research in the discipline, and the ability to transcend that grasp when meeting the almost entirely pragmatic concerns of "real world" consulting clients. Some of the constituent features of schizo-survivability are (1) recognizing differences between academe and the "real world"; (2) managing oneself; (3) knowing the region and the organization; and (4) bridging theory and practice. This concept should prove useful for individuals who currently hold or hope to hold simultaneous teaching and consulting positions, but more research is needed to understand and better document this dual role. (HTH)

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COMMUNICATION CONSULTING FROM ACADEME TO THE "REAL WORLD"

A number of decisions must be considered before an academician does consulting, training, or other work inaddition to the usual responsibilities of academe. Eich, in a national survey of communication consultants, reports that 68% of those surveyed do consulting while working at an academic institution.1 What constitues consulting? It includes everything from organizational development to one-shot problem solving, speech presentations, training workshops, political advising, ghost writing, giving advice, and tutoring.

Because little has been written about the realities of the academician who wishes to do consulting work, this article presents some realistic and useful advice about moving from the everyday academic responsibilities of academe to the "real world" of consulting. Dicussion includes the decisions that persons in academe must make, along with the corresponding advantages and disadvantages to consulting, and survival once consulting work has begun.

DECISIONS

1. Location. The first decision for the perspective consultant is whether to work in or outside of academe. Consulting as an extra professional activity while affiliated with an academic institution has its limitations.2 According to Eich's survey, 37%. of those who consult from within an academic institution believe

that those institutions restrict and limit their consulting activities.[1]

To be associated with an academic institution is considered by many who consult to have the advantage of providing a steady income while bringing in extra income. A disadvantage to consulting as an EPA is the limitation on extra income. The by-laws of some institutions, for example, state that faculty members may earn additional income but that monies made inside the university (that is, university--related consulting) may not exceed a certain percentage of one's annual salary. The amount of money an academician may earn from nonunversity activities varies from institution to institution--the best guide is for the academician to know his/her university's by-laws. Some academic institutions, for example, limit faculty members to the equivalent of double their annual academic salary. For those who leave academe to consult, there is no limitation on the amount of money to be earned. In fact, those consultants who survive outside of academe are usually the ones who make the largest incomes.

The academician/consultant has the added advantage of credibility: the academic institution provides an affiliation or identification that is generally not available to those who start without an existing reputable organization; and the name of the institution, in most cases, has an established credibility that carries over to the consultant. Thus, the consultant reaps the benefit of the institution's credibility. Of course, if a potential client knows that a consultant is incompetent or unethical, then the credibility of the institution, no matter how

good, will do little to enhance or restore the credibility of the consultant.

Other advantages of being an academician/consultant is access to the most recent research, research facilities, computers, and colleagues who can be excellent resources.

2. Time. The major disadvantage, no doubt, to consulting as an academician/consultant concerns time. First, ost academic institutions limit the amount of time that a faculty member may be off campus. For example, some universities' by-laws state that such absences should not exceed two days per month during the academic year, excluding vacations and summers, or while actively teaching. This restriction, of course, does not exist for consultants outside of academe.

Second, the actual amount of time that faculty members can afford for consulting--given their academic responsibilities of teaching, research, and service plus family, personal, and other activities--is limited. Barker, in a colloquium presentation, talked about these problems.[4] How faculty members divide their time determines the amount remaining for consulting, which, of course, depends upon all other activities or vice versa. A decision facing an academician/consultant, therefore, involves the following question: How much time can be devoted to consulting and still meet the responsibilities to the academic insitution and to personal lives?

Putting consulting ahead of all other academic responsibilities raises an ethical question that can not be ignored, for obligations to the institution, department, colleagues, and students must be met. For faculty members to

remain viable at most academic institutions, they must involve themselves in research, teaching, and service (service can, of course, include consulting, but for the most part it means committee work or extra teaching responsibilities such as advising, etc.). Eich's survey found that approximately 50% of the communication consultants felt that consulting added to their climb up the academic ladder. But 40% of those surveyed by Eich felt that consulting had no effect on their advancement and approximately 11% suggested that it was detrimental to their advancement.5

For academicians to miss classes or to eliminate research from their responsibilities in order to do consulting is a big mistake that has many ethical as well as practical concerns. The consequences for tenured faculty members may be low-merit increases and reduced potential for promotion. Faculty members at the highest rank (full professor) who choose to put consulting ahead of their academic responsibilities, at the very least, lose the respect of their colleagues and students. The nontenured faculty members who avoid their academic responsibilities to do consulting work usually find consulting to be the "kiss of death." On the other hand, if faculty members are able to meet their obligations to students and remain active in their research, then consulting can be an excellent contribution to their service record and also can provide additional income. It is when they neglect their students and their research that they undermine their academic responsibilities. If faculty members know their academic responsibilities and meet them, then consulting can be rewarding.

3. Stamina. There are tremendous physical demands on persons who remain in academe and consult, for consulting not only consumes time but also energy. Like time, there is only so much energy that people can produce. While some individuals appear to have an unlimited amount of vitality, consulting still has an impact on human resources. Consider that consultants consume energy in preparation, presentation, and travel to and from consulting jobs. The rule-of-thumb for most academician/consultants is that consulting should not interfere or lower the quality of their academic responsibilities. Eich found that 91% of the communication consultants he surveyed believe that consulting aids them in their teaching and that 81% believe that consulting is helpful to their research. It was suggested that consulting helps teaching by providing real-life examples which can be added to instructors' content; opens doors for internships; aids in doing field research; provides new ideas for topics to research; and helps faculty advisees with thesis or dissertation topics.[6]

4. Contacts. How to get started in consulting while affiliated with an academic institution is probably the most asked question by those wanting to get into the "real world" of consulting. The first contact might come from people whom the academician knows. Often, students become a valuable source for consulting jobs; e.g., the very first contact and consulting job one of the authors had was through a student who asked him to present a talk to a group of 12 corporation purchasing agents in the Hammond and Gary, Indiana, areas. The presentation netted a $50 donation to the Vince Lombardi Cancer Fund. This job led to others, and so on. After leaving the Hammond area and arriving in Nebraska, the same

sort of events occurred. A student, a full-time police officer in charge of training, wanted one of the authors to do a workshop for the Nebraska State Law Enforcement Agency. This four-day workshop paid $200 per day plus expenses. Again, the workshop lead to others, and so on.

Another type of contact for persons in education is with people in the business community, either through joining various civic groups or through normal business activities. For example, in the process of obtaining a loan from a bank, the topic arose as to what subject one of the authors teaches. After a few minutes of discussion, plans for a workshop were created to help bank employees with their communication skills. According to Eich, most communication consultants (approximately 88%) get their consulting work through direct recommendations from work at their institution or a contact in the community.7

Belonging to a speaker's bureau can be a means for obtaining contacts. For example, the Chamber of Commmerce of most communities as well as universities have speakers' bureaus. A recent request by the university's speakers' bureau resulted in a noon speech presentation for about 50 middle-management people at Lincoln Telephone. A mini-workshop for a home-and-school association provided a number of contacts with business people, each of whom represents a possible future consulting job. In addition, some academician/consultants use advertising, direct mailings, or "cold" calls, all of which are usually not as successful as the direct personal-contact method. These examples illustrate a few of the ways to reach people in the "real world."

Fees. How much should an academic consultant charge a client? This question is not easy to answer. The going rate for consultants varies depending on the economic climate. The top-rated consultants receive $2,000 and up per day plus expenses; the average consultant receives between $200 and $1,000 per day plus expenses. There is no specific way of determining a fee--one way may be as good as another. It depends upon supply and demand and the kind of work to be done.

Schizo-Survivability

When considering the attributes or competencies prescribed for consultants by Bennis and Lippitt, one gets the impression that consideration of the academician/consultant's survival has been entirely neglected as a critically necessary skill.[8] Moreover, university administrators need to acquire a thorough understanding of what it takes for an academician/consultant to survive in academe. Seeing this need, survivability with its features is discused as an academician/consultant skill.

Schizo-survivability is a skill which encompasses the academician/consultant's ability to transcend the perspectives of academe.[9] This transcendence constitutes an inherent dilemma, hence "schizo," confronting the person who must adapt and survive in two quite different contexts--academe and the "real world." By definition, the academician/consultant is simultaneously required to have both a firm grasp of theory and research in the discipline and a reliable ability to transcend that grasp when meeting the almost entirely pragmatic concerns of organizational members in the "real world." In short, the academican/consultant must be able to transform by coping with these two different contexts.

Having briefly identified and defined schizo-survivability as a skill, the following explicates some of its constituent features for the academician/consultant: (1) recognizing differences between academe and the "real world"; (2) managing oneself; (3) knowing the region and organization; and (4) bridging theory and practice.

1. Recognizing differences between academe and the real world. The academician/consultant moving from academe to the "real world" must wrestle with the discrepant motives, values, and orientations of these two contexts.10 After all, academe is, for the most part, concerned with the acquisition of knowledge simply for the sake of knowing more, of adding to understanding and insight. This characteristic must be contrasted with knowledge for the sake of doing in the "real world." While members of an organization might think it is nice that academicians have an increasingly rich knowledge about communication, their orientation is one almost exclusively geared toward improving efficiency or effectiveness on the basis of that knowledge. If knowledge fails this reality test--namely, margin and profits--then the practitioner has little use for it in the organization, and understandably so, given the highly competitive market place and tight economy. Realize, then, that what might be entirely fascinating, stimulating, and intriguing to the academician, because of his/her love of knowledge, may be totally irrelevant to a manager who is putting out brush fires every day just to survive.

Every step an academician/consultant takes must be based on the fundamental difference in approach to knowledge, theory, and

research. When the academician develops consulting material for an organizational development (OD) project, workshop, or whatever, he/she never assumes that anyone in the "real world" will be excited about the same things that stimulate the intellect of the academician. For example, one of the authors once wrote a course for utility employees aimed at helping them interact more effectively with inquiring consumers. He had included what he thought was a masterful overview of Erving Goffman's "On Facework,"[11] material which his father (editor and final decision maker) conspicuously had left out of the completed course. Only after he had conducted a few workshops did he realize why his "old man" had eliminated the beautiful but conceptually difficult Goffman material. The average lineman in an electric utility company simply would not have found it very meaningful.

A second fundamentally critical difference between academe and the "real world," hinted at above, is the striking clash between the goals of the two: research, teaching, and service vs. profit and survival. Most in academe do not have to worry about the possibility of an institution of higher learning closing because of lack of profit--or do they? Certainly, there are budget cuts, and the problems of publish or perish, but the survival instinct in the "real world" appears more powerful. Profit and survival are the name of the game in the "real world." The consulting organization to which one of the authors belongs has witnessed the impact of this profit and survival orientation in the last two years. Demand for consulting services related to human relations has simply been eliminated in some cases by budget cuts. A Virginia-based organization employing approximately 100

persons, for example, had a total training and development budget of $1,000 for all of 1982, including on- and off-site training, travel expenses, consulting fees, etc. Invariably, the orientation of the business world becomes the academician/consultant's, too, at least to the extent that when "real world" survival and profit are threatened, so is the academican/consultant's survival and profit.

2. Managing oneself. This feature of schizo-survivability offers an exceptional challenge. Regardless of what skills the academician/consultant possesses, irrespective of how experienced he/she is, the very act of moving from one world view to another entails a high price emotionally and psychologically. It is easy to see how a academician/consultant could be affected by two full-time obligations, either one of which involves more than a sufficient number of potential stressors to jeopardize a person's health. In academe a person must prepare lesson plans, work with students, correct papers, develop and implement research projects, write research papers, endure possible rejection of research, cope with administrators, and deal with internal politics, to name a few. A similarly stressful series of tasks presses the consultant: clients who really do not know what they want and who change their minds when the academician/consultant arrives (Schein's purchase model and doctor-patient model notwithstanding); a workday which begins at 7:00 A.M. with breakfast with the manager and ends at 10:30 P.M. after a dinner honoring leaders in the community; counseling sessions which are led involuntarily over soup at lunch; and, of course, delayed flights and stalled vehicles to and from the consulting site.

Combined, then, these multitudinous stresses will press a person to the limits of human adaptation. Psychological and physical stamina become a legitimate concern in schizo-survivability.

3. Knowing the region and organization. Cultural incompetency or ethnocentricity remains one of the most advanced illnesses in America. This is equally true in international, regional, and interorganizational relations. However, schizo-survivability demands that a academician/consultant understand the region and organization he/she is about to enter. For example, it can be somewhat problematic for a Midwesterner to travel to the heart of Virginia or North Carolina and do communication consulting for the simple reason that the dialect and way of life are different. Credibility as a communication consultant is difficult to establish when he/she repeatedly must ask "What did you say?" just to grasp the words an organizational member is saying. More important, the culture is different-- more laid back, more easy going, and less time-bound--than in the central states.

The following illustrates this notion of cultural differences. In parts of the South, a highly enculturated system exists for addressing others, a system which defines the status of relationships. For example, when addressing a male person on a casual basis, as in a strictly business relationship, the person should be addressed as Mister. This form of address designates a relationship of some distance. But if the relationship is beyond acquaintanceship toward friendship, the appropriate title is Mr. Jim (assuming that his first name is Jim). And if individuals know each other well, if a fairly close friendship exists, then

and only then is the person referred to by his first name alone. Most regions of this country lack such a formalized system of addressing others to signify the status of a relationships. A consultant from the Midwest who travels to the South must incorporate this system of addressing others if he/she expects to survive, to abide by the norms. Failure to do so will likely result in the academician/consultant's credibility being questioned.

Every organization is a unique living entity with a language all its own, and even though Schein has argued that a process consultant need not be a content expert, a consultant simply must acquire and speak an organization's language to be as successful as possible.12 Yet, despite the uniqueness of language in each organization, similar types of organizations have similar languages. For example, electric utilities have their lingo--grunts, running outages, outside employees, inside employees, and substations. To succeed in such an organization, a consultant should have minimal competency in speaking the langauge. Unless an academician/consultant has a vast amount of experience, this need to speak the language of a firm presents a sound argument for being somewhat specialized in the type of organizations with which one consults.

4. Bridging theory and practice. Finally, the previous features of schizo-survivability blend into the last characteristic--bridging theory and practice. This interface encompasses the differences in values, orientations, and motives in the two contexts; challenges an academician/consultant's ability to manage in two distinct occupations; and tests the

academician/consultant's knowledge of the region and organization. In transcending the perspectives of academe and in making those modified perspectives practical in the "real world," the academician/consultant must draw on all possible resources. What was knowledge for the sake of knowing must become knowledge for the sake of profit and survival. What was stressful pressure in holding down two occupations must become a rich pool of skill and experience to benefit both academe and the "real world." What was mere knowledge of a region and organization must be applied in creative ways to make the subject matter completely applicable to the personal and organizational lives of the academician/consultant's clients. This bridge between theory and practice, research and application, knowledge and profit will certainly provide the ultimate indication of the schizo-survivability skill.

To illustrate, a communication academician/consultant simply will not succeed in training a group a linemen about active listening if he/she fails to draw upon examples from a lineman's daily experience on the job. And all the knowledge in academe will not facilitate success if the academician/consultant has ignored a basic audience analysis or cannot make communication skills come to life by providing lengthy examples of the importance of those skills to the lineman setting poles, hanging transformers, and sagging wire. If academician/consultants can transcend the skill of active listening by moving it out of Rogers's theory and into the lives of utility employees trying to handle irate consumers, then they are displaying schizo-survivability. Having once transcended the skill, having made it

meaningful in the real world, the academician/consultant must again transcend it by incorporating the consulting experience in broadening and enriching theoretical explanation of active listening as a component of Rogers's theory in an interpersonal communication class.

SUMMARY

The academician who engages in consulting faces many challenges, most of which have been ignored by authorities on consulting. The first part of this article presents five different aspects of decision making. The first decision is whether to remain in academe and consults or to go outside of academe and be a fultime consultant. The second is related to how much time an academician/consultant can afford to give to consulting. The third concerns amount of energy and effort an academician/consultant can devote to consulting without jeoparizing both activities. The fourth is how an academician/consultant goes about making and getting consulting contacts. Finally, the decision on how much to charge for consulting is discussed.

The second part identifies schizo-survivability, a skill which addresses the consultant's ability to transcent the perspective of academe in adapting to the demands placed upon the academician/consultant in the "real world"; four features are discussed. The conceptualization of schizo-survivability should prove useful for individuals who currently hold or hope to hold simultaneous positions in academe and consulting. Finally, more research is needed to better understand and document the role of the academician/consultant.

FOOTNOTES

1 Eich, Ritch. "Communication Consulting Practices: State of the Art." Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1977.

2 The terms extra professional activity is to be credited to a presentation by Larry Barker at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Fall, 1982.

3 Eich.

4 Barker.

5 Eich.

6 Eich.

7 Eich.

8 Bennis, Warren. Organization Development: Its Nature, Origins and Prospects. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969; Lippitt, Gordon. Visualizing Change: Model Building and the Change Process. Fairfax, Virginia: NTL Learning Resources Corporation, 1973.

9 We chose "transcend" as the verb to describe schizo-survivability for good reasons. "Translate" fails to capture the complexities involved in moving from academe to the "real world" and academe again. A consultant must be able not only to switch language codes at a moment's notice, but also to cope with other issues discussed under each of the four constituent features of schizo-surviability.

10 Although this discussion is couched in terms of a consultant's ability to learn and speak the language of an organization, we cannot emphasize enough the consultant's need to adjust his/her vocabulary when moving from academe to the "real world," e.g., big words are often shunned in the "real world." Even a sharp

group of managers does not constitute a seminar in communication!

11 Coffman, Erving. "On Face-work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction. Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Process. Vol. 18, No. 3, August, 1955, 213-231.

12 Schein, Edgar. Process Consultation: Its Role in Organization Development. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969.